



Stony Creek, Branford

### **WHY DO WE NEED A LONG ISLAND SOUND INVENTORY AND BLUE PLAN?**

Long Island Sound (LIS) is the Northeast’s largest estuary and it includes some of the nation’s most productive natural habitats. The Sound is crucial to the way of life of the more than 20 million people who live within 50 miles of its waters, generating billions of dollars annually for local economies through tourism, fishing, boating, and other uses.

Today there are mounting demands for use of the Sound, from new energy development and the prospect of underwater tunnels, to new forms of aquaculture.

The character of the Sound could be significantly changed with one major development project, as prospects for approval of the Broadwater Liquefied Natural Gas facility proposal in 2001 showed.

Currently, Connecticut has no authority to comprehensively plan for multiple future uses of the Sound. Project applicants set the agenda, and the public and DEEP and other agencies can respond only through the regulatory process to individual projects. This does not allow Connecticut to be proactive in securing the best future for the Sound in the public interest including sustaining the social, environmental and economic benefits upon which we depend.

### **WHAT WOULD AN INVENTORY AND BLUE PLAN DO?**

A Long Island Sound Inventory and Blue Plan would be a science-based process for inventorying current uses and resources in coastal and offshore waters and using that information to guide new future uses. The Plan would seek to protect traditional uses such as boating, fishing, shipping and aquaculture along with critical natural resources by reducing potential conflicts among uses and minimizing environment impacts from possible new uses so that economic, environmental, security, and social objectives for the Sound can be met.

A Working Group of representatives of Connecticut and New York state agencies, federal agencies, user groups, such as the Marine Trades Association, and conservation organizations, has been working for two years to assess the current state of information and data availability and discuss how an inventory and plan can best be compiled and developed.

Without legislative authorization, however, an inventory and plan will not be legally binding in Connecticut waters. For a Blue Plan to legally influence federal agency projects and

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## LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN *continued*

For more information  
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permitting, the plan would need to be “incorporated” through legislation into CT’s federally approved coastal management program.

### **WHAT ARE THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE BLUE PLAN LEGISLATION?**

The two essential elements of the Blue Plan legislation are:

1. The development of a LIS Inventory and Plan by state agencies working with stakeholders to compile the best available data on resources and uses and
2. DEEP authority to use the plan to implement the state’s existing regulatory and proprietary authority over our public trust waters.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering legislation that will establish a Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory, and a Long Island Sound Blue Plan to become part of the state’s coastal management program.